

(Breakthrough, Spring 1986)

## DISCOVERING THE SHADOW

by Robert Tollaksen, M.A.

The use of Robert Monroe's *DISCOVERY* tapes in a Pain/Stress Reduction Clinic provides a gentle self-governing method for the release of the dark side or shadow. Set in a community hospital (Memorial Hospital, St. Joseph, MI), clients are self- and physician-referred for a wide variety of stress related disorders, ranging from headaches to cancer.

When I opened this biofeedback program seven years ago, I was warned not to mention yoga or meditation. I kept one volume of *DISCOVERY* on my book shelf for four years until I introduced it to my clients. Now I have 25 volumes in use and am pleased to report on its value as a facilitator of transformation—particularly as it relates to the shadow.

My model of the shadow has its roots in C.G. Jung and Ken Wilber. The ego level is on an upward evolutionary path, half-way between the primal Garden of Eden and the Omega point or self-realization. The ego is the persona or mask we wear in ordinary consciousness. The shadow is the opposite polarity of the ego—the text we secretly write, a text whose authority we refuse to admit. On the horizontal dimension are the opposite polarities of holding on and releasing. Disconnection from the shadow as is typical in our culture results in two-dimensional figures—bland on the one extreme and horrific on the other. The *DISCOVERY* tapes for those psychologically ready facilitates access to those secret texts and undeveloped creativities, providing an option to consciously choose one's behavior and values.

The horizontal dimension of holding on and releasing is facilitated by *DISCOVERY* tape #4, *Release and Recharge*, where much of the conscious fears and conflicts are dealt with—clearing the way for movement to a higher level of organization, of increased complexity, propelled by the reconnection with one's opposite polarity.

Integrating these shadow contents may involve a variety of techniques, from imaging to role play and affirmations. Sometimes a person will become stuck while listening to a tape and be unable to continue... by walking through that tape with the client while listening to speakers (vs. earphones) and picking up the images and feelings at the block, a reconnection with the shadow is usually made. Biofeedback monitoring adds a unique dimension of marking that point as well as measuring the resolution.

- A. A 32-year-old woman with panic attacks for 3 years was blocking on tape #2 of *DISCOVERY* (*Intro Focus 10*). By active imagining, she apparently regressed to the Mt. Vesuvius eruption where she suffocated to death. The next session she reacted to Bob's countdown and would panic at "10"... she was "floating," and the fear was of

leaving her body. Four months later (10/85) she experienced another “peeling away of the onion.” Preset by competition in her aerobics class, exacerbated by the rock/disco beat, a panic attack was triggered by entering the expressway ramp on her way home. Asked when she felt that way before, she remembered driving with her mother when her mother suffered a similar attack with some heart involvement. Continuing with the image recall, she spoke of being born two months premature, and her C-section birth with the umbilical cord wrapped around her neck.

- B. A 56-year-old man with a failed double bypass and severe chest pains was the first client introduced to *DISCOVERY* (10/82). We've gone through considerations of homosexuality to violent dreams (which no longer have “deadly twists towards the end”). He's been inactive with the tapes for awhile. Now, after some encouragement, he is ready to move on to the second album, *THRESHOLD*.
- C. A 51-year-old man with tension headaches backed off *DISCOVERY*. Apparently, it was taking him deeper than he wanted to go at the present. He was an eye witness to the killing of over 100 people by a buzz bomb in WWII London. At age 27, he underwent electro-shock therapy. I switched him to the *Free Flow* tapes. The shadow that emerged for him was his silent resentment of “friends” who were smoking in his house. His “nice guy” image which had brought him millions in industry was not working for him at home where he had lost control.

*DISCOVERY* is a powerful tool in healing the split between mind and body, between ego and shadow. It's not for everyone—but when used with gentleness, humor and thought, it can accelerate the healing process.

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